

Message Text

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PAGE 01 LAGOS 07232 121414Z
ACTION AF-10

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TAGS: PGOV, PDEV, NI
SUBJECT: THE CA: RECRIMINATIONS AND QUESTIONS

REFC: (A) LAGOS 7171 (B) LAGOS 7114, (C) LAGOS 7030

1. RECRIMINATIONS AND QUESTIONS CONTINUE TO ECHO THROUGH THE PRESS IN THE AFTERMATH OF THE ABRUPT ADJOURNMENT OF THE CONSTITUENT ASSEMBLY (CA). REPRESENTATIVES OF THE 101 DISSENTING MCAS HAVE REPORTEDLY MET WITH CHIEF OF STAFF YAR'ADUA WHILE PRESS COMMENT CONTINUES TO EXPRESS DISMAY AT THE WAY THE CA ENDED.

2. COMMENTS FROM MCAS REPORTED IN THE PRESS INCLUDE AN INTERVIEW WITH DR. CHUBA OKADIGBO (IMO) WHO SAID THAT REPRESENTATIVES OF THE 101 MCAS WHO OBJECT TO CHAIRMAN UDOMA'S DISMISSAL OF THE CA MET WITH CHIEF OF STAFF YAR'ADUA WITH A VIEW TO HAVING A MEETING WITH CHIEF OF STATE OBASANJO. OKADIGBO REPEATED HIS ACCUSATIONS AGAINST UDOMA FOR HIGH-HANDED BEHAVIOR AND ADDED THAT HIS GROUP FAVORED THE CREATION OF FOUR MORE STATES: KATSINA, ENUGU, QUA IBO IN THE FOMER
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PAGE 02 LAGOS 07232 121414Z

CALABAR PROVINCE IN CROSS RIVER STATE, AND KOBIN IN THE OLD KABBA PROVINCE OF KWARA STATE. (FYI: OKADIGBO COMMENTED THAT THE ENUGU STATE WAS TO HAVE BEEN NAMED WAWA STATE (SIC); HOWEVER, IT HAD BEEN DECIDED THAT ENUGU WAS A PREFERABLE NAME BECAUSE "WAWA IN HAUSA LANGUAGE MEANS A FOOL AND WE DO NOT WANT TO HAVE A FOLLISH STATE." END FYI)

3. NORTHERN MCAS CONTINUE TO ATTACK UDOMA'S RULING WITH ALHAJI SHEHU UMARU ABDULLAHI (KANO) CLAIMING THAT:

--THE UNCEREMONIAL WAY IN WHICH THE ASSEMBLY WAS SENT PACKING AND THE UTTERANCES OF THE CHAIRMAN WERE REALLY ASTONISHING AND A CLEAR CONTRADICTION OF THE DECREE ESTABLISHING THE ASSEMBLY."

ON THE OTHERHAND, DR. SOLA SARAHI (KWARA) SUGGESTED THAT IF MEMBERS WISH TO PURSUE THE SHARIA ISSUE, THEY SHOULD INCLUDE IT IN POLITICAL PARTY MANIFESTOS. AS FOR ABRUPT ADJOURNMENT OF THE CA, SARAHI COMMENTED:

--"THE CHAIRMAN WAS IN A HURRY TO MEET HIS DOCTOR IN LONDON, THAT MAY BE WHY EVERYTHING ENDED UP IN A HUSH, HUSH MANNER."

4. SCATTERED EDITORIAL COMMENT IN THE PRESS CONTINUES TO REFLECT DISMAY AND TENDS TO VIEW THE ASSEMBLY'S DEMISE AS A DISTURBING OMEN FOR THE FUTURE. JUNE 10 NIGERIAN TIDE REMARKS:

--IF THE CONSTITUENT ASSEMBLY CANNOT ACHIEVE A CONSENSUS, COMPOSED AS IT IS BY SOME OF THE MOST DISTINGUISHED MEN AND WOMEN THIS FEDERATION CAN BOAST OF, THEN WHERE ARE WE BOUND FOR?

--WE FIND IT DIFFICULT TO ENVISAGE HOW THE PRESENT REGIME CAN HONESTLY HAND OVER POWER IN THIS TENSE LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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PAGE 03 LAGOS 07232 121414Z

ATMOSPHERE. AND YET, THE PEOPLE IN AUTHORITY ARE HONOURABLE MEN AND PATRIOTS, WHO WOULD NOT LIKE THIS COUNTRY TO DRIFT ONCE AGAIN IN LESS THAN TWO DECADES INTO AN ABYSS OF DARKNESS.

5. IN A SIMILAR VEIN, JUNE 12 NIGERIAN TRIBUNE ASKS:

--WHAT WORRIES THIS COLUMN, IN THE MIDDLE OF ALL THE HULLABALOO, IS THE CONTINUATION OF THE SAD TREND WHEREBY NIGERIANS SCARCELY EVER SUCCEED IN DOING ANYTHING, HOWEVER IMPORTANT, WITH ENOUGH DECORUM AND MATURITY; THE ASSEMBLY TOOK OFF GRACIOUSLY ON OCTOBER 6, 1977 WHEN THE MEMBERS WERE ADDRESSED BY THE HEAD OF STATE. WHY WAS IT NOT POSSIBLE TO BRING THE PROCEEDINGS OF THE HOUSE TO A GRACIOUS ENDING WHERE MEMBERS COULD TAKE LEAVE OF ONE ANOTHER IN AN ATOMSPHERE OF PEACE AND UNITY AS WELL AS A SENSE OF ACHIEVEMENT? WHY SHOULD THE ASSEMBLY CLOSE AMIDST RECRIMINATIONS AND PROTESTS?

6. DAILY TIMES HAS NOT COMMENTED EDITORIALY ON THE CA'S ADJOURNMENT EXCEPT FOR A BRIEF NOTE IN THE

JUNE 12 "(GRAPEVINE" SECTION WHICH OBSERVED:

--NOWHERE IN THE HISTORY OF CONSTITUTION-MAKING HAS
SUCH BODY ENDED WITH THE TYPE OF CONTROVERSY THIS
ONE HAS GENERATED.

THAT CONTROVERSY ITSELF NEGATES THE ACCEPTABILITY
AND THE LEGITIMACY OF THE DOCUMENT WHICH IS
SUPPOSED TO GUIDE US.

THE CONSTITUENT ASSEMBLY SHOULD BE RECALLED AND
IT SHOULD END ITS DELIBERATIONS WITH THE DIGNITY
ONE EXPECTS SUCH A BODY OF PEOPLE TO POSSESS OR IS
THIS ASKING FOR TOO MUCH?

7. COMMENT: REPORTS FROM THE SATELLITE VILLAGE INDICATE
THAT MOST OF THE MCAS HAVE LEFT TOWN WHILE THE REMAINING
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PAGE 04 LAGOS 07232 121414Z

MEMBERS ARE NOW TALKING ABOUT POLITICAL PARTIES. THUS,
THE DUST MAY HAVE BEGUN TO SETTLE OVER THE UNSEEMLY
END OF THE CA'S DELIBERATIONS. UNLESS THE FMG DECIDES
TO RECONVENE THE ASSEMBLY TO ATTEMPT A CEREMONIAL
CONCLUSION, WHICH WE THINK IS UNLIKELY, IT WOULD APPEAR
THAT THE CA'S CENTER STAGE ROLE IN THE RETURN TO
CIVILIAN RULE IS OVER. END COMMENT
WYMAN

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